



TO: Joint Appropriations Subcommittee
on General Government
DA: 30 January 2013
RE: Department of Commerce Montana Main Street Program

I am writing you on behalf of the Montana Downtown Coalition members to express our support to reinstate the funding for the Department of Commerce's Montana Main Street Program.

The Montana Main Street Program provides many of our sister communities with critical funding, professional and technical support for local efforts to preserve and enhance their historic, "main" streets.

Every year at the Montana Downtown Conference we hear incredible accounts of programs and projects being planned and implemented by small communities across the state on a volunteer basis with the support of the Montana Main Street Program. The annual Montana Downtown Conference is a collaborative effort of the Montana Downtown Coalition and the Montana Main Street Program.

As the director of several downtown organizations here in Bozeman, I am truly impressed by the amount of good work being done in places like Stevensville, Lewistown and Terry with the modest funding provided by the Montana Main Street Program.

As Montana continues to recover from the national recession, we need to continue to invest in our Main Streets. The Montana Main Street Program is the only entity providing any assistance to over a dozen Montana communities.

Downtowns and Main Streets across Montana are the heart and soul of each community. Montana downtowns—whether single historic streets or larger urban centers—represent what is unique and genuine about our hometowns. Nothing embodies our quality of life better than our downtowns.

Downtowns not only define each Montana community but also represent a significant portion of each town's taxable value, employment base, and commercial activity. In addition, Main Streets are the social and cultural centers of our community.

Chris Naumann, Montana Downtown Coalition President
chris@downtownbozeman.org

The Montana Downtown Coalition is the collaborative effort of professional organizations from across the state to support our vibrant and sustainable community downtowns.

Collectively, Montana's downtown organizations invest over \$10 million a year into the state's Main Street districts. This financial commitment subsequently leverages \$40 million of private and other public investment into downtowns across the state.

